

Today Roll Call, a leading newspaper on Capitol Hill, published an [opinion - editorial](#) I authored regarding my efforts to repeal ObamaCare. In this column I explain how President Obama and Congressional Democrats have inflicted enormous costs on the American people by ramming ObamaCare through Congress using backroom deals and budget gimmicks. ObamaCare will raise the health care premiums for American families by over two thousand dollars per year. Additionally, the law imposes a five hundred billion dollar tax increase on families and small businesses, which will severely undermine job creation and cripple future economic growth.

I believe it was incredibly irresponsible to force this unpopular and deeply flawed measure on the American people. For these reasons I introduced repeal legislation, the Reform Americans Can Afford Act ([H.R. 5424](#)), which is supported by 36 Republican cosponsors, including every member of our House Republican Leadership. My bill also includes several common sense, incremental reforms that will help lower health care costs and increase access to care without growing government or adding to our nation's debt. I have included the text of my column below and I encourage you to [share your thoughts](#) .

Herger: Price Tag of Health Reform Law Too High

June 24, 2010

The enactment of ObamaCare comes with a price tag that Americans simply cannot afford — massive tax increases that will kill jobs and hurt American families, debt that threatens to crush future economic growth and burden our children with a bill they can't pay, and a health care system in which Washington, not patients and doctors, is in charge of medical decisions.

This government takeover of health care and implementation of an unconstitutional mandate flies in the face of the principles that have made America great — individual freedom, competition and open markets. The damage is already being felt by small businesses and middle-class families. It's not too late to reverse this. That's why I introduced the Reform Americans Can Afford Act (H.R. 5424), which would immediately repeal ObamaCare's premium increases, \$500 billion in Medicare cuts that threaten coverage for seniors and failure to allow people to keep the insurance they have and like. These damaging provisions would be replaced with commonsense solutions that will lower health care costs without increasing the size of government or our skyrocketing debt.

President Barack Obama has acknowledged that our growing national debt is a threat to our future prosperity and that we need fiscal responsibility. Yet instead of using the health care reform debate as an opportunity to put our health care system on a fiscally sustainable path, the president took America in the opposite direction. He added a new entitlement program that is destined to pile on trillions in additional debt in the coming years.

So it's no surprise that, over the last year, Obama and Congressional Democrats operated behind closed doors, made secret deals and used budget gimmicks to hide the true effect of their law. They made many promises to the American people that they knew they couldn't keep, but none was more patently false than the claim their plan would bring down health care costs.

Under ObamaCare, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, millions of American families will see their health care costs go up by \$2,100. From the beginning, the American people told us that the reform effort should focus on reducing health care costs. "Reform" that comes in the form of 2,700 pages of new government mandates, bureaucracies and tax hikes will only make matters worse.

It is dangerously irresponsible to inflict more than \$500 billion in tax increases that will hurt families and small businesses and kill jobs at a time when unemployment is hovering around 10 percent and our economic outlook is tenuous at best. That's part of the reason the National Federation of Independent Business has joined with 20 states in legal action to overturn ObamaCare. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce said the Democrats' health care overhaul "will not increase coverage — rather it will lead to outsourcing, off-shoring ... reducing workforces, and reducing wages." Despite the president's comments about job creation being a top priority of his White House, ObamaCare is a job-killer, plain and simple.

The American people understand all of this. A recent Rasmussen Reports poll showed that 58 percent of Americans favor repealing this radical experiment. The same poll tells us that a majority of Americans aren't fooled by the Democrats' budget gimmicks and intrinsically understand that the law will increase the federal budget deficit and raise health care costs while lowering the quality of care.

My bill would replace ObamaCare with incremental reforms that have broad support and will help lower costs by empowering consumers, not government. It would make health insurance more affordable for all Americans by eliminating frivolous lawsuits, permitting Americans to buy insurance from anywhere in the country and allowing smaller businesses to pool together to buy insurance on the same terms as large corporations. The CBO has found that the Reform Americans Can Afford Act will lower premiums by as much as 20 percent compared with ObamaCare.

Proponents of ObamaCare will invariably say that repealing their law eliminates several popular new reforms that improve access to affordable, secure coverage. What they don't want you to know is that my legislation achieves many of the same goals to increase access to care — but in a fiscally responsible manner. By tackling the cost issue first, we can also ensure that those with pre-existing conditions have access to affordable coverage through strengthened and fully funded high-risk pools, allow dependents to remain on their parents' insurance until age 25 and make it illegal for insurance companies to unfairly drop someone's coverage when they get sick, without adding trillions to our national debt.

From the beginning of this debate, the American people have understood that our nation cannot afford ObamaCare. We can't afford the staggering debt, the crushing tax burden and the surrender of our freedoms in the health care system. We must repeal this bill or we risk even

more damage than the Obama administration has already delivered.

Rep. Wally Herger (R-Calif.) is the ranking member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health.